Vitu language

Vitu (also spelled **Witu** or **Vittu**) or **Muduapa** is an Oceanic language spoken by about 7,000 people on the islands northwest of the coast of West New Britain in Papua New Guinea.

Vitu	
Muduapa	
Native to	Papua New Guinea
Native speakers	(8,800 cited 1991)[1]
Language family	Austronesian ▪ Malayo-Polynesian ▪ Oceanic ▪ Meso-Melanesian ▪ Bali–Vitu ▪ **Vitu**
Writing system	Latin
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	`wiv`
Glottolog	`mudu1242 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/mudu1242)`[2]

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Classification

Vitu is so closely related to the neighbouring Bali language that the two are sometimes considered to be a single language, called **Bali–Vitu**.

Vitu and Bali appear to be members of a Meso-Melanesian cluster of the Oceanic languages.

Phonology

Vowels

	Front	Back
High	i	u
Mid	e	o
Low	a	

Consonants

		Labial	Coronal	Velar
Nasal		m	n	ŋ
Plosive	**voiceless**	p	t	k
	prenasalized	ᵐb	ⁿd	ᵑg
Fricative		β	ð	ɣ
Sibilant			(s)	
Rhotic			r	
Lateral			l	

/t/ is realized as [tʃ] before /i/.

/s/ occurs only in loanwords from Tok Pisin, such as *sikul* "school".

Phonotactics

No consonant clusters or final consonants are allowed in native Vitu words: all syllables have a CV or V structure. Loanwords, however, may have different structures.

Writing system

Vitu is written in the Latin script. Only between 15% and 25% of speakers of Vitu are literate in the language, but many more are literate in Tok Pisin, the national language of Papua New Guinea.

A a	**B b**	**D d**	**E e**	**G g**	**H h**	**I i**	**K k**	**L l**	**M m**
/a/	/ᵐb/	/ⁿd/	/e/	/ᵑg/	/ɣ/	/i/	/k/	/l/	/m/
N n	**Ng ng**	**O o**	**P p**	**R r**	**S s**	**T t**	**U u**	**V v**	**Z z**
/n/	/ŋ/	/o/	/p/	/r/	/s/	/t/	/u/	/β/	/ð/

Grammar

Morphology

Complex voice systems so characteristic of Austronesian languages of Taiwan and the Philippines undergo significant reduction in most Austronesian languages of Eastern Indonesia and Oceania. Vitu is unusual in terms of morphology when compared to most other Oceanic languages spoken in Melanesia. It is one of very few Melanesian languages that have a passive voice-marking system.

Syntax

The usual word order of Vitu is SVO.

References

1. Vitu (https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/wiv/) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Muduapa" (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/mudu1242). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.

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External links

- Vitu Grammar Sketch (http://www-01.sil.org/pacific/png/pubs/0000475/Vitu_Grammar_Sketch_vol51.pdf)

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